

GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES
FEBRUARY 23, 2015

GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT: Hicks, Shay, Henke, Campbell, Dumas

GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS COMMITTEE MEMBERS ABSENT: Shaw, Fedler

SUPERVISORS: Lindsay, LaPointe, Gang, Idleman, O'Brien, Haff, Armstrong

Debra Prehoda, Clerk of the Board

Karen Pratt, IT Director

Al Nolette, County Treasurer

Laura Chadwick, Real Property Director

Harrison Steves, Supt. Bldgs. & Grnds

BOE Commissioners Allen & Curtis

Chris DeBolt, Planning

Public

AGENDA AS PRESENTED IN COMMITTEE NOTICE:

- 1) Call to Order
- 2) Accept Minutes – January 20, 2015
- 3) Department Requests/Reports:
 - A. Buildings & Grounds
 - a. Monthly Updates
 - b. 2015 Goals
 - B. Board of Elections – Discuss Village Elections
 - C. Information Technology
 - a. Web Publishing Policy
 - b. 2015 Goals
 - D. Real Property
 - a. 2015 Goals
 - b. Resolution RE: Delegation of Authority for Corrections Under \$1,500
 - E. 2015 Departmental Goals – All Departments
- 4) Other Business
- 5) Adjournment

Chairman Hicks called the meeting to order at 10:04 A.M.

A motion to accept the minutes of the January 20, 2015 meeting was moved by Mr. Henke, seconded by Mrs. Dumas and adopted.

DEPARTMENT REQUESTS/REPORTS:

BUILDINGS & GROUNDS – Harrison Steves, Superintendent, addressed the following items with the committee:

- Thanked Chairman Lindsay for the comments praising his staff for their hard work on the parking lot at Friday's Board meeting noting that he passed that along to his employees.
- Monthly Updates, handout on file:
 - Law Center lobby renovation is complete
 - Installed ¼ diamond plate over cooler floor at the Law Center – to stabilized floor
 - EOC renovation project is in full swing
 - Treasurer's renovation project still in progress
 - Installed shelving
 - One more wall needs to be built
 - Busy with snow removal
 - Complex cooling and heat pumps need to have a plan for replacement – There are six pumps: two (2) cooling tower, two (2) chilled water and two (2) heat. All three areas are different sizes and all are now obsolete. He is currently having them rebuilt but sooner or later it will require new pumps which mean you have to re-plumb. Pumps range in price between \$3300 and \$4300 plus installation by outside

vendor for an estimated cost of between \$10,000 and \$13,000. He is recommending replacing them on our schedule; he would like to as they go when it is beneficial to us. He will get prices to replace these pumps which are as old as the building, 23 – 24 years old. The Treasurer asked if these pumps tie into the current HVAC contract because they are all part of the same system and replace all the pumps now doing a change order in the capital project for the pumps out of contingency. The recommendation is to get new pumps. He will get a better quote and possibly do a change order on the current HVAC contract because the vendor is already on site to include these new pumps.

- Building Management Project – Eastern Heating & Cooling hopes to have cooling ready for April.
- Salem Substation needs to have furnace replaced. The boiler is about 40,000 BTU which is too small for the building and he has known this since the purchase. The system has been extensively checked out. He plans to replace with an appropriate sized boiler, about 175,000 BTU's.
- 2014 Completed projects:
 - New roof for Buildings B and C
 - Upgraded phone system
 - Rebuilt cooling tower
 - Moved COOP agents
 - Moved Code Enforcement to Annex 1
 - Built new 911 Center
 - Went out to bid for new Buildings Management system
 - Began cross training of employees
- 2015 Goals and Complete Projects list attached.

BOARD OF ELECTIONS – Discuss Village Elections – Chairman Hicks stated village elections are next month, March 18th. Villages have the option to run their own or have the County run the election which has a cost – inspectors, ballots, moving machines. Roger Wickes, County Attorney, read a section of law pertaining to this issue: The Board of Trustees may adopt a resolution subject to a permissive referendum (paraphrasing) providing the village election shall be conducted by the Board of Elections. The Board of Trustees of a village which has adopted such a resolution which is wholly in one county, which is all ours, may also adopt a resolution that providing that the village elections shall occur on the day of the general election provided that all election districts contained within such village are wholly within such village. It is an opt in by the Village Board of Trustees by resolution however that resolution is subject to a permissive referendum; so you have to wait for the permissive referendum time to clear. The requirement for a permissive referendum makes all the difference. Chairman Hicks stated that villages basically have to let the Board of Elections know by September if they are going to do the village election; make a decision one way or the other. Commissioner Allen stated for example it will cost the Village of Whitehall approximately \$600 for the County Board of Elections to run their election noting that if the village clerk conducts the election the expense will be about \$400 and basically the extra cost for the County to conduct the election would be the transport of the machines. The problem is that the village does not know far enough ahead whether the election will have all unopposed candidates or if there will be a multitude of candidates on the ballot. The County Attorney stated the law gives the Board of Elections time to know they will be doing the election for the village and if they are, it is stripping local control from the Clerk and giving it to the Board of Elections. This is done far enough in advance so the people of the village can make that decision; opportunity to challenge decision. Chairman Hicks stated you are making the villages commit in

September and he is requesting a resolution to our legislators to change that requirement because he feels it is a burden on the villages. It is a big expense to the villages to have to make that decision that far in advance. Once a village makes the decision to have the County Board of Elections conduct the elections, it carries forward for future elections. The County Attorney discussed an a la carte option like what the Board of Elections does with the schools which is you can use our stuff as much or as little as you choose and charge you accordingly and certification would remain with the local clerk. Discussion ensued. Mr. Henke stated if there is no opt out clause for the village, the legislature should address and a resolution would be appropriate. Chairman Hicks asked the Board of Elections to come back with a recommendation on this a la carte policy and fee schedule; how it will be done and how much the charges will be.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY – Karen Pratt, IT Director, addressed the following items:

- **Web Publishing Policy** – Chris DeBolt, a member of the new website core team, distributed and provided an overview of the attached draft Website Use and Content Management Policy. Mr. O'Brien offered several suggestions; recommends employees go back and check that they posted the correct file, and the policy should address copyrighted materials, registered trademarks, videos, links to videos and photos that might be copyrighted and quotes. Chris needs to get the appendix done and explore Mr. O'Brien's concerns and will bring the policy back next month. Any comments on the draft policy should be forwarded to Chris and Karen Pratt, IT Director.
- **2015 IT Goals** – distributed and explained the attached handout.

REAL PROPERTY – Laura Chadwick, Director, addressed the following items with the committee:

- **2015 Goals** – handout attached. Mentioned how she sends out a monthly newsletter.
- **Payment Option** - Allowing some of the regular customers to charge account and the Treasurer will invoice for the charges.
- **Resolution to Delegate Authority for Corrections Under \$1500.** – Requesting a resolution delegating authority to the Director of Real Property to issue corrected tax bill for refunds or clerical errors under \$1,500 without going to committee. A motion to present a resolution delegating authority to the Director of Real Property to issue corrected tax bill for refunds or clerical errors under \$1,500 was moved by Mr. Shay, seconded by Mrs. Dumas and adopted.

2015 DEPARTMENT GOALS - VARIOUS DEPARTMENTS:

Clerk of the Board – distributed and provided brief review of 2015 goals, attached.

County Attorney – mentioned addressing raise the age issues.

County Treasurer – will provide goals and objectives.

OTHER BUSINESS: None.

A motion to adjourn was moved by Mr. Campbell, seconded by Mrs. Dumas and adopted. The meeting adjourned at 11:53 A.M.

Respectfully submitted,
Debra Prehoda, Clerk
Washington County Board of Supervisors

2015 Buildings and Grounds Goals and Project

GOALS

- 1) Continue to cross train employees
- 2) Hire people with higher Technical abilities
- 3) Look for ways to cut cost and be efficient
- 4) Maintain buildings so they are safe and efficient
- 5) Complete 2015 Projects
 - a) Complete building management system
 - b) Build EOC offices
 - c) Replace carpet in building 'B' basement
 - d) Make a porch for Annex 1
 - e) Move and rearrange the IT department
 - f) Move ramp at St. Paul's Head Start
 - g) Remove old switch gear in 'A' building

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY
2015 GOALS AND OBJECTIVES (PRIORITY 1 STATUS)
JANUARY – JUNE 2015

Core Switch Assessment/Replacement: Ongoing assessment of core switches related to 2015 projects and mediation of any infrastructure needs.

- Anticipated 2015 Technology Capital Project Funding of \$60,000

Disaster Recovery: Build of redundant backup infrastructure and redundant internet connectivity as a critical service. With respect to the enterprise and the demand and expectations of computer connectivity, we need to be prepared to function with backup in the event a critical component falls.

- 2014 Technology Capital Project Funding of \$72,077
- February 2015 – Configuring firewall build to include redundant internet circuit in addition to identifying the circuit itself. Consideration and planning of backend infrastructure and software to build out redundancy.

Firewall Replacement : Current firewall requires replacement to efficiently manage redundant internet circuit

- 2014 Technology Capital Project Funding of \$33,520
- June 23, 2014 Evaluating schedule – anticipating this a August 2014 project
- Delayed in August with relation to 911, moved to early September
- November 20, 2104 requested Budget Officer approval, and subsequent PO
- December 2014 - to date - vendor working on configuration, reviewing current rules

Server Operating System Updates: Retire Windows 2003 server hosts (end of life), upgrading as necessary to virtual infrastructure.

Training: Assist departments either individually or as a group, to identify training topics and departmental needs with respect to technology. Provide tool for self paced learning as well as facilitate group led sessions.

- December 2014/January 2015 – acquired additional licenses for learning tool. Allocated licenses to individual users, as well as made recommendations for playlists. Attempting to identify available space where there can be a training environment “always on”, convenient, for users to attend an instructor led, self-paced or lab environment/one on one training. This space will also be used for software demonstrations, trainings, as well as it will provide an environment easily accessible to confer, and consult with vendors.

Web Site Redesign: Using Content Management Software (CMS) our county website will be redesigned to enable departments to update their content, with ample legal review and triggers. The team will consider social media feeds, meeting minute workflow, and electronic voting as additional modules during review. A CMS will more efficiently deliver content to the web.

- 2014 Technology Capital Project Funding of \$33,520
- Selection by May 2014, Contract Review June 2014, August 12, 2014 Kick off call
- September 30, 2014 Civic Plus on site consultation
- October 9, Web Optimization Meeting, November 12, department content update due, November 13, delivery of site layout, December 18 Check In, January 8 Website Reveal, User Training January 26 week.
- Soft launch February 12, 2015.
- Post launch, February 13, 2015, the department is working closely with departments to see that they can post content, are comfortable posting the content, and providing assistance one on one.
- Scheduling a follow up training for last week in March – coordinating a location.

Wireless Expansion: Continued wireless deployment in Buildings A, B, C, Law Enforcement Center, Annex I and Annex II.

- 2014 Technology Capital Project Funding of \$6,500, Anticipated 2015 Technology Capital Project Funding \$30,231
- May 2013, the first instance of wireless deployed in Building B second floor classroom, and Board of Supervisors Chambers. Anticipate the need to expand this in 2014 to other areas of Buildings A, B, C, Law Enforcement Center, Valmet Trailer for Board of Elections
- July 2, 2014 walk thru to determine number of access points, July 23 received quotation for 2015 build out.
- February/March 2015 – provide further access to Supervisors in Committee room, as well as consider DPW shop. Beyond this, review the anticipated access point list, and review funding and priorities.

2015 GOALS & OBJECTIVES (PRIORITY 2 STATUS)

JULY – DECEMBER 2015

Always on Meeting Room Training room with wireless connection, at least 10 units for users, “always on” projector with computer connection and ample bandwidth for video training. Room shared by all departments, available for presentations and training initiatives.

- Anticipated 2015 Technology Capital Project Funding of \$15,000

Asset Management Tool that enables discovery and management of technology related assets

- Anticipated 2015 Technology Capital Project Funding of \$19,200

Electronic Voting/Meeting Agenda Improvement in workflow efficiency within County Government as well as delivery to community.

- Anticipated 2015 Technology Capital Project Funding of \$18,000

Personal Computer Replacement/Printer Replacement or Redirect: Information Technology will recommend computer replacement where necessary. In addition, Information Technology will recommend printer replacement or recommend redirect of print jobs to network devices where applicable. Continued investment of endpoint devices, rather it end of life, insufficient, inefficient equipment, on a 4 - 5 year cycle depending upon the hardware.

Remote Connectivity: Upgrade connectivity at six highway barns time clock locations replacing modem clocks with network clocks in order to update the backend server infrastructure. Additional efficiency benefits include DPW employee reference to MSDS material, training, culvert inventory, requests for service from public, payroll sheets, inventory (either FE or local)

- March 2014 review quote Granville/ Fort Edward /Hebron/Jackson/Putnam/Whitehall
- Postpone until after Firewall replacement to avoid multiple changes after the fact, unless something comes forward that needs immediate attention.
- July 17, 2014 Granville site TW ready, need to install county firewall (equipment ordered)
- August 8, 2014, firewall equipment installed, wireless access point installation review.
- September 18, 2014 Granville site running,
- January 20, met with new DPW SuperIntendant to review/discuss his objectives
- 2014 Technology Capital Project Funding of \$2,100
- Anticipated 2015 Technology Capital Project Funding of \$11,460

Software development : Focus on web based delivery, less client installations, enabling mobility.

Enhanced data sharing among departments/users. Consider consolidated views, portals, data analytical tools. Enable IT staff with development tools. Enable users with self sufficiency.

Virtual Technology: In 2014 we updated two of our physical "parent" server hosts, subsequently moving "children" virtual hosts to serve off from it. While there is not anticipation of new physical hosts in 2015, should any unanticipated server needs arise, Information Technology will continue to use virtual technology enabling efficient delivery, high availability and maintenance of infrastructure.

DEPARTMENTAL PROJECTS OUTLINED FOR Q4 2014 – Q4 2015

Administration Further exploration of communication/notify software. Demonstration August 8, 2014

Administration/Treasurer Possible consideration of Position Budgeting module in Payroll System.

Administration/Personnel/Treasurer Review/Assessment of functionality of Kronos Time and Attendance system in current version and discuss any need to take advantage of upgraded version.

Clerk of Board Office may consider product for agenda workflow and electronic voting. Cannot address until after Web Site Design project in motion. Anticipated 2015 product demonstration.

District Attorney Office ongoing review of optional software for efficiency. Assisting with equipment specification for Grand Jury Room to display evidence via computer or other device to large display screen.

Information Technology Review of computer related policies.

Personnel Review with department the manual Position Control Cards, evaluate computerization of such.

Public Defender Case Management System from the NYS Public Defenders Association. June 26, 2014 met to discuss requirements, budget and timeframe. Project launched December 8, 2014. Project Complete

Public Health replacement of electronic records management system. Q1 2015. February 2015, reviewing specifications.

Public Safety/Sheriff Offices purchased J2 software, RMS and CAD Q4 2013. This application is anticipated to kick off Q3 2014, once Public Safety has moved to their new location and the new 911 phone system in place. Other components for the Sheriff Office include further consulting/development on Civil Application, SJS conversion, discussion on hardware related to evidence module. Additionally, we need to give consideration to what this means with respect to other local law enforcement agencies – how they are to connect, the impact to Information Technology resources from a connection support perspective. February 2014 virtual environment made ready. April 2014 Server soft purchased, vendor on site. June 30, 2014 Civil testing. July 30, 2014 CAD use begins. Require further discussion with Sheriff department on hardware related to evidence module. January 19, 2015, users mobile; configuring server application that will make for persistent connection in field. Prepared evidence computer with scanner and label printer. Installed RMS and mobile app on departmental devices. Firewall changes for 911 agency reporting and other interfaced applications. Awaiting configuration and testing of some interfaces.

** February 2015 Further consideration into a testing/training environment. A duplicate environment for testing updates and training new users, or scenarios in the application.

** February 2015 Further consideration for a replicated environment to enable continued operations should the primary require shutdown for problem resolution, updates, etc.

Public Works/Safety Office(County Attorney) : Review application access/end point hardware needs at highway barns as the infrastructure connecting the barn time clocks are updated. Review data transfer between FE office and barns, transport options, training and safety training. September 2014 Granville connected and time clock operational. Plan for further expansion for both connectivity and computers in location.

Real Property Possible expansion of Citrix connection for Real Property Assessors that are interested in using the technology. (Salem/Jackson/Granville/Cambridge now operational)

Sewer District Office is implementing SCADA network. Upgraded Internet connection to handle additional bandwidth. Reviewed for remote support, secure connection and SD needs. June 2014 reviewed data closet and bandwidth needs. Specified equipment requirements for expansion. Late Q2 2014 or later. June 30, 2014 participated on site and conference calls relating to backend infrastructure and project scope. Asset Management demos July 23, 2014. Awaiting pricing information as of August 31. December 2014 reviewed contract. January/February 2015 closet readied, begin software installations.

Sheriff Office will be in receipt of equipment to upgrade patrol, investigative and supervisory vehicles with Rocket, Avail and Net Motion technology, enhancing their communication in the field. Each vehicle will require installation, configuration and testing.

Sheriff Office working with Warren County on project. Assisting with modem/firewall specifications. June 2014 participated in conference calls, setup firewall config, requested IP from Verizon wireless.

Sheriff Office has expanded a number of items requiring a review of storage needs. Consider all inputs and camera devices.

Treasurer/Personnel Offices will be impacted by the upgrade of Payroll System, anticipated Q3 or Q4 2014. The upgrade to the NextGen product will call for preparation work including (2) onsite visits to review our application as it configured today including items such as benefit codes, employee codes, longevity, custom code, and custom interfaces. While our environment is prepped for NextGen, it is necessary to build additional environments for configuration and migration. Contract signed, Core Team confirming site visits, kickoff call July 23, 2014. Site visits confirmed for 9/2/14 – 9/5/14 and 11/10/14 – 11/14/14. Site visit 1 complete. Site visit 2 rescheduled for January 5, 2015. As of January 9, in Go Live.

Treasurer/Administration/Clerk of Board Offices have discussed Financial solution. It is anticipated that at some point in 2014 (Q3 or Q4), we will be faced with the decision to either continue with our current financial application or move to another product. As of January 2014, it has been determined that we will be a BETA site for the new IFM product. Delivery of BETA estimated April/May 2014. As of March 2014, current vendor advised that they no longer have solution provider. Project delayed. February 2015, early demo of product. Further review of Financial System.

Veterans Office will be electronically submitting claims and benefit information. Requires scanning, document organization and storage. Additionally, will be teaching and training in the field throughout the County.

WIC Office in receipt of display for waiting room. Working with department on capabilities.



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*Laura B. Chadwick,
Director*

2015 Goals

- To cross train staff so office can remain consistent in completing tasks that arise, and day to day office procedures.
- To improve BAR Training for all town Board of Assessment review members.

CLERK OF THE BOARD - 2015 GOALS

Opportunity to Start New with Financial Accounting System (IFM) – Use the update of the Financial Accounting System under the Direction of the Treasurer as an Opportunity to start new with System Engaging Staff to Actively Participate to Expand Comprehension of the System.

- Opportunity to offer suggestions to improve the system
- Training Opportunities
- Many changes have occurred over the last year and half between the two departments and use of the system. The Treasurer has allowed us to engage more in the system promoting improved communications and feedback between the two departments.
- Promote staff actively participating in update soliciting and encouraging feedback on the process. Looking for efficiencies in the process which encompasses both the voucher and budget processes.
- Meet with staff weekly and discuss impacts to our operations.
- Conversion process should be completed prior to the start of the budget process.

The project did not move forward as planned in 2014 due to the vendor and process has started up again as of February 2015.

Create Standard Workday Reporting Procedure for Elected and Appointed Positions Identifying Positions for Completion of Required Paperwork to Comply with NYS Retirement System Regulation 315.4 by July 1, 2015.

- Attend NYS Retirement Training Seminar
- Identify positions required to report.
- Update current Master Spreadsheet
- Develop a procedure to identify at time of hire or changes in positions employees that are required to keep a record of work activities or be reported on the Standard Workday resolution working with the Treasurer and Personnel Offices.
- Work with Treasurer on electronic filing of report with the NYS Retirement System.

Archive Completed/Closed Out Project Documents (Permanent Storage Documents) by September 30, 2015, the first step in approaching a workable filing system both hard copy and electronic with entire staff participation.

- Establish List of Completed/Closed Out/Permanent Documents for transfer to the Archives.
- Remove and organize documents
- Properly list items and label contents.
- Documents filed in the archives
- Reassess file storage space for next phase.

Review, identify and implement changes to office forms for efficiency and continuous improvement of office operations to enhance services and implement new forms by May 1, 2015.

- Review forms, i.e. Resolution Data, Budget Transfers, Equipment Requests, for compliance with current operations and identify and target specific/necessary information ensuring proper processing.
- Find creative solutions and update forms
- Update information on the shared drive and/or intranet.
- Notify departments of any changes.

Long Term Goal – Participate in Exploring, Designing and Planning for Multimedia Tools for Meetings. Continue to be innovative in the work we do moving toward long term goal.

Revised: February 23, 2015

Dated: September 2, 2014

Washington County

Website Use and

Content Management Policy

I. Purpose:

The purpose of this policy is to establish guidelines and procedures to be followed with respect to the creation and management of content on Washington County's official public website utilizing the Content Management System (CMS) selected and maintained by the county's Information Technology (IT) department. The county's website serves as a vehicle for communication of important information to residents, the media, those who receive services from the county and those who have business with the county. As such, it is imperative that the guidelines and procedures outlined in this policy are adhered to by all departments and employees tasked with managing and creating content for the county's official website.

II. Policy:

- a. **Scope:** Each department within the county is responsible for the creation, review, publishing, and maintenance of the content located on the department's official page and subpage(s) within the county's website. This policy and the guidelines set forth herein are to be referenced and adhered to at each stage of the content creation and management process.
- b. **Account Creation/Deletion:** Each Department Head shall have the authority to select which employees (if any) within their department are granted access to the CMS. To grant or revoke such access to the CMS, the Department Head shall complete and submit the ***Website Content Management System Account Creation/Deletion*** form found in Appendix A of this policy. This form shall be submitted to the Director of the IT department. When requesting access be granted to an employee, the above form must be accompanied by a copy of the ***Receipt of Website Use and Content Management Policy*** form, located in Appendix B of this policy, signed by the employee for which access is being requested.

- c. **Content Creation and Management Process:** The County's official website is an important means of communicating information to residents, the media, and those who receive services from or have business with Washington County. As such, it is imperative that the content created for and maintained on the County's website is accessible, accurate, appropriate, and informative. To achieve this, the following process has been established to provide checks and insurances that content posted to the website meets the criteria outlined later in this policy.

I. Content Authors, Approvers, and Owners:

Each Department head shall have the responsibility of assigning the following roles to designated employees within their department for the purpose of creating and managing content on their department's section of the county website. Where department size and staffing roles allow, it is preferred that the three roles outlined below be assigned to separate employees. By involving multiple employees in the creation, review, approval, and maintenance roles, the likelihood of errors or inappropriate content being posted is reduced. As such, in departments with three(3) or more employees, Content Authors may not also be Content Approvers, and vice versa.

In departments with fewer than three (3) employees, the department head, at their discretion, may assign the roles below in any combination to the employees within their department. He or she may also request that the County Administrator act as Content Approver for his or her department by submitting said request in writing to the County Administrator, and transmitting a copy of that request to the Director of IT and the Chairman of the Board of Supervisors. In such instances where the County Administrator is designated as Content Approver for a department, it is expressly understood that the Administrator is tasked with ensuring the adherence of the submitted content to the guidelines outlined within this policy, and the department head is fully responsible for the accuracy and relevance of all information contained within the content.

- a. **Content Authors:** are responsible for creating and entering content relevant to their department into the CMS and keeping it up to date once it has been published. Content developed by Content Authors must be reviewed and approved by a Content Approver prior to its publication.
- b. **Content Approvers:** are responsible for the review and approval of content developed by Content Authors prior to the final publication of that content. It is the task of the Content Approver to ensure the

accuracy, appropriateness, and adherence to rules and guidelines established in this policy of any content published and maintained on the county's website.

- c. Content Owners: are the custodians of the content in their department's section of the county's website and are responsible for ensuring that content published on the website is correct and relevant. Content Owners may also be Content Authors or Approvers. Every effort should be made by Content Owners to remove outdated information from their content area in a timely manner.

II. Content Publication Process

Content to be published on the county's official website shall be developed by Content Authors, reviewed and approved by Content Approvers and monitored and maintained once published to the website by Content Owners. Responsibility for the accuracy, appropriateness, and adherence of content to the guidelines contained within this policy rests with each employee granted the classifications outlined above *and* with the department head to whom those employees report.

III. Emergency Situations

In the execution of their duties, the following departments occasionally deal with issues of immediate importance relating to the health, safety, and welfare of the residents of the county: the Sheriff's Department, Public Safety, Public Health, and the Department of Public Works. Should the department head of any of these departments determine that information related to public health safety and welfare must be posted immediately, he or she may develop and publish such information, or direct such information to be developed and published immediately, without adhering to the standard approval process outlined above. In these instances, it is the policy of Washington County that the timely dissemination of critical information to citizens in times of adverse circumstances outweighs the reasons previously set forth for adherence to the content creation process established herein.

IV. Voluntary External Review

There may be times when Content Approvers and/or department heads have questions regarding content that has been created and its adherence to this policy or whether the publication of said content is in the best interest of the county and its residence. In such instances, a department head may request external review and approval of proposed content *prior* to its publication on the website. Such requests for approval shall be made

to the County Administrator and County Attorney, via a written request for external review which shall be sent to both the Administrator and Attorney.

Upon completion of their review, the County Attorney or County Administrator shall provide a written response to the requesting department head. The results of this review shall be binding. Failure to abide by the recommendation of the Administrator and Attorney may result in disciplinary action against the employee responsible for such failure.

In the case wherein the Attorney and Administrator cannot reach an agreement on whether or not the voluntarily referred content should be posted, the initial request shall be submitted to the Chairman of the Board of Supervisors, who shall issue a final and binding decision as to whether or not the content in questions is acceptable to be published on the website.

V. Removal of Undesirable Content

Each Department Head shall have the authority to remove any and all content from their department's page and subpages at any time for any reason. Should the department head feel that such content had been published to the site in violation of this policy; disciplinary action may ensue, at the discretion of the Department Head, against the individual responsible for the posting of such content. Department Heads shall not, however, have the authority to remove content from any section of the website controlled by another department.

The County Administrator, County Attorney, and Director of IT, or their designees, shall have the authority to remove content from any section of the county's website at any time for any reason. Should the Administrator, Attorney, or Director of IT feel that any such content was published to the site in violation of this policy, disciplinary action may ensue against the individual responsible for such posting.

III. Content Guidelines

The guidelines contained in this section are the basic standards that should be adhered to when authoring, approving, and reviewing website content. These guidelines outline certain aspects of content creation the County feels are important. Additional, and more technical, guidelines can be found in the CivicPlus Content Best Practices Guide located in Appendix C of this policy.

Washington County's official website provides a unique opportunity for the county to communicate with members of the public, and the citizens it serves. While websites differ from other, more traditional, means of communication, it is imperative that employees involved in developing and managing content on the website understand and acknowledge that the county's website is an official communication channel. Every effort must be made to ensure the appropriateness and accuracy of any and all information published to the website.

Adherence to these guidelines will help ensure that all content published to the website meets these important criteria.

- a. **Purpose:** The County's official website is used solely to provide information about county operations and services, and opportunities directly to the public. At no point, on any portion or subpage of the website, is it appropriate or permissible to post information that is not strictly keeping with this purpose. No personal, non-professional or superfluous information should ever be published to the website.

Content Authors and Approvers should keep in mind that visitors to the site are coming for information. Most frequently, that information will be contained within the text of a page. Effort should be made to make information easily available, by using subheadings, and breaking up large blocks of text. Writing concisely and eliminating unnecessary verbiage will assist in this goal by limiting the overall amount of text presented on pages.

- b. **Tone:** While email, social media, and other new forms of communication are also viewed as less formal than more traditional means, all content drafted for the website should be written in a formal and professional manner as any official printed publication would be. Slang, and informal language should be avoided, and effort should be made to ensure the grammatical correctness of all content.
- c. **Site Accessibility:** The ability for all members of the public to access the county's official website is paramount. Section 508 refers to a Federal Law detailing steps that must be taken to ensure access to electronically disseminated information

to persons that may have various impairments that would negatively affect their ability to access traditionally-presented electronic information. It is the expressed policy of Washington County that every effort be made by Content Authors, Publishers and Owners to ensure the compliance of all content published on the county's official website to conform to these standards. The Government Content Management System (GCMS) utilized to create content for the county's website automatically incorporates many of these standards, and the county will run Section 508 content compliance applications to check for complete compliance at certain points each year.

There are, however, items that should be kept in mind as content is generated to help ensure compliance.

- 1) Provide alternative text to any images or graphics that are to be displayed. Visually impaired users of the website may utilize special software that communicates this alternative text to a user who cannot perceive the visual image. Effort should be taken to make this alternative text meaningful, with the understanding that some users may not be able to see the image or graphic for which the alternative text is being provided.
 - 2) Similarly, some users may lack the ability to differentiate certain colors from one another (color blindness). Steps should be taken to ensure that graphics that interpret information can be understood in black and white.
 - 3) Additional guidelines and suggestions can be found on the Federal Governments website devoted to Section 508 compliance found at www.Section508.gov. The county's Information Technology Department can also provide additional guidance and information.
- d. Links: Links can be divided into two major categories, those that link to information located within the county's website, and those that link to external information or websites.

Internal Links: When linking to information located within the county's website, the hyperlink should always contain the relative link, not the absolute link. A relative link will begin with "/" or "\\" whereas an absolute link will begin with "http://" or "www." Use of relative links

significantly decreases the chances of links to pages within the county's website becoming broken as edits and changes to the website are made.

When linking to another web page within the county's website, the link should open in the same window the user is currently viewing. This provides a more streamlined experience for the user and maintains the perception that the user is navigating one comprehensive and contiguous site.

When linking to a document of any type, the link should be set to open in a new window. Studies have shown that users typically close the browser window when done with a document rather than hitting the 'back' button in their browser. Allowing documents to open in new windows prevents this common behavior from ending the user's session completely.

External Link: Special care must be taken when linking to resources or websites outside the county's official website. Only links to pertinent and official information may be used. Absolute links must always be used when linking to pages or information on external websites. In addition, Content Owners must regularly check the continued validity of all external links, preferably monthly. Any change made to an external website by its owners has the potential to break links made from Washington County's site. A disclaimer specifying that Washington County is not responsible for the content presented or the privacy policy of websites to which external links are provided is presented on the footer of each page throughout the county's website. While this disclaimer alleviates the legal culpability of the county with regard to egregious content and/or privacy policies of websites to which links are provided, care should be taken to ensure that only necessary and reputable websites with valid and useful information are linked to in order to avoid negative user experiences.

- e. Images: Images are a useful and powerful tool to engage users and in some instances provide important information. The ability of those with certain disabilities to discern and comprehend the content of images and graphics can be problematic, and recommended strategies to deal with this are presented in Section 3(c) of this policy.

The scenic beauty of Washington County is something that is desirous to showcase to residents and visitors alike, and the county's official website is an appropriate tool to do so. However, there are myriad concerns surrounding the use of photographs on the county's official website. These concerns relate to technical issues such as resolution, size, and orientation of the photo itself as well as legal concerns such as permissions, waivers, and the right to privacy of those depicted in photos. Determining the appropriateness of each photo to be used within the website by each Content Author and Owner is not feasible. Each Content Author and Content Publisher may only select and display photos that reside in the **Photo Gallery** module of the GCMS. Content Authors and Content Owners are *not* authorized to upload photos directly to this gallery without first following the procedures outlined below.

The photograph information sheet provided in Appendix III of this policy provides detailed specifications on the technical requirements of photos that are to be submitted for approval to the Photo Gallery. The checklist also contains several questions that should be answered by the person submitting the photo for approval to aid those reviewing the photo. Under no circumstances should a photo containing an individual who is not a county employee be submitted for approval without the department responsible for taking the photo has obtained and filed a release form from the individual(s) depicted in the photo. A copy of the release form to be used is also contained in Appendix III of this policy. It is the responsibility of each department to obtain and maintain releases from individuals whose photos have been taken for use on the county's website.

All photos to be considered for approval for use on the county's website shall be submitted to the Information Technology Department via email, with a completed photo information sheet. Upon receipt, the Information Technology Department will ensure that the technical requirements for use on the website are met. The Information Technology Department will also review photos for potential content issues. Should such an issue be identified, the Director of Information Technology may, at his or her discretion, refer said photo to the County Attorney and County Administrator for their review. In such cases, the Director of Information Technology, the County Administrator and the County Attorney shall constitute the approving authority, and final approval shall not be granted to a photograph without at least two of the three individuals referenced

above indicating their written approval of the content of the image in question. Such approval may be indicated through memo, or email.

Records of photos submitted for approval, both those ultimately approved and disapproved, shall be retained by the Director of Information Technology, including final written determinations pertaining to any images referred to the Administrator and Attorney for approval. Such records shall be retained in accordance with the county's adopted records retention policy.

Exemptions: In the execution of their duties, the following departments occasionally deal with issues of immediate importance relating to the health, safety, and welfare of the residents of the county: the Sheriff's Office, Public Safety, Public Health, and the Department of Public Works. Should the department head of any of these departments, or the Chairman of the Board of Supervisors, identify that an immediate risk to the health, safety, and welfare of the community exists, and that such risk can best be mitigated through the use of a photograph or other visual aid, such department head may immediately post, or direct to be posted, such photograph or visual aid without adhering to the approval process outlined above. It is the policy of Washington County that in the event of an immediate threat to the health, safety, and welfare of the community, the need to provide timely dissemination of information to the public is more important than adherence to this policy.